

WHEATLAND  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# NEWS



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Scott City, KS 67871

**Syracuse—620-384-5171**

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# Safety Starts with You

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and at Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. we think it's a great time to check your home for potential safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan. While we can extend their operations with maintenance and care, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

### Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations in a kitchen, bathroom or laundry room often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets.

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make

**When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.**

sure you hit the black reset button when you are done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

### Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

### Limits on Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as

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Bruce W. Mueller



# Bringing Broa

Wheatland Broadband was formed in 2001 to offer internet services to the true last mile in rural western Kansas. At a time when larger telecommunications companies had seemingly left rural residents and communities behind. With the lack of high-speed internet service to our area, Wheatland Electric and its Board of Directors decided to do with internet much like it did in 1948 with electricity which was to bring internet to the underserved areas of rural Kansas.

According to the 2018 Broadband Progress Report produced by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), more than 24 million Americans lack broadband wireless access at the benchmark speed of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads. Approximately 97.9 percent of Americans residing in urban areas have access to fixed terrestrial broadband, while only 69.3 percent of rural Americans have this quality of access.

This nearly 30 percent discrepancy is a compelling reason why the Statewide Broadband Expansion Task Force, chaired by Kansas Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s Doug Shepherd, was created and is motivated to expand broadband coverage to rural Kansans.

Bruce Mueller, Wheatland's General Manager, recently presented to the Broadband Task Force on Rural Broadband Needs, Barriers and Solutions.

Currently, we have more than 3,150 members that are spread over approximately 5,000 square miles. Looking ahead Wheatland Broadband has plans to lease dark fiber which is fiber that is currently not in use. This fiber will increase bandwidth to critical network sites in our subscriber network.

We believe that broadband access is absolutely vital for promoting economic competitiveness and for improving day-

to-day quality of life for consumers. Our goal is to continue to provide high-speed internet to rural Kansas.

## Cord Cutting 101

What is cutting the cord? In most cases, folks talking about "cutting the cord" are referring to canceling their current cable or bundled TV service. Some people take this a step further and use the term for getting rid of paid TV completely.

### ► STEP 1: EVALUATE YOUR ENTERTAINMENT NEEDS

Do I need to pay for TV? What shows do I watch? When do I watch them?

### ► STEP 2: EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS – OTA, SATELLITE, CABLE, STREAMING

There are pros and cons to all these options, including equipment needs, installation costs, monthly fees, reliability, etc. Pick the one that best suits your needs.

## What is Streaming TV?

Streaming TV usually refers to the digital distribution of TV content—basically content accessed over the internet.

## What You Need

1. **An internet connection** – to have a quality streaming experience you need to have a strong internet connection of at least 3 Mbps per stream, but for HD 5 Mbps or higher is needed. Many streaming devices use Wi-Fi, so having a good quality Wi-Fi router with a strong connection is important.
2. **A streaming device** – whether it be a smart TV, a streaming media player, or a game console, a device is required to connect the TV to internet.

**CUTTING THE CORD?  
YOU HAVE OPTIONS.**

**NEWER, FASTER, CHEAPER!**

From live viewing to on-demand streaming, find the right service for you.  
Contact Wheatland Broadband for a full list of streaming service providers.

# band to Rural Kansas

**3. A streaming service** – there are a growing number of streaming services available for a monthly cost. There are also a handful of free services. The content all varies, from live local channels to on-demand shows and movies. Some have DVR features built in, some don't because the shows are available any time.

## Internet

In order to stream TV you need an internet connection. Several packages from Wheatland Broadband are listed below if you don't currently have one. Three main things will impact whether you will have a good streaming experience:

**1 YOUR SPEED.** Streaming requires a wide range of internet speeds, which vary by provider and picture quality. Most services list their requirements on their website. Here are some basic guidelines to give you an idea of the speed you might need:

- ▶ **Standard definition (SD) (480 pixels)** – 0.5-2.5 megabits per second (Mbps)
- ▶ **High Definition (HD) (720 pixels)** – requires 3-6 Mbps
- ▶ **Best quality HD (1080 pixels)** – requires 3-8 Mbps
- ▶ **3D** – requires 9 Mbps or more
- ▶ **4K** – requires 15-25 Mbps (or more)

Multiply how many TVs you will have running by the quality of the stream you want to watch for a rough estimate of how much speed you will need.

**2 YOUR WI-FI.** Use cable to connect devices to your internet router wherever possible for the best experience. However, this is not always feasible. A good quality Wi-Fi router with dual band technology will help.

**3 DATA LIMITS.** Unlike Wheatland Broadband, if your internet service includes a monthly limit or cap on the amount of data you can use, streaming TV may not be for you. This cap will limit how much data you can download before your speed slows down or your service is suspended. SD streaming uses around 1 GB of data and HD about 3 GB per hour. Divide your monthly amount of data by one or three to see how many hours of TV you can watch before your internet service slows down or stops.

## Streaming Services

A video streaming service is an on-demand entertainment source for TV shows. It's like a cable provider, only you usually pay a month-to-month fee with no contract and use the internet and a streaming media player to access it. You usually need a debit/credit card to charge the monthly fee. There are more than 100 streaming services. Luckily, many come with free trials, so you can try them, but remember to cancel if you don't like them! Here are just a few:

- ▶ **Movies and Original Content**  
Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, YouTube
- ▶ **Access to TV shows and Live Local Channels**  
Direct TV NOW, Fubo TV, Hulu with Live TV, Playstation Vue, Sling TV, YouTube TV
- ▶ **Specialty Channels with their Own Streaming Service**  
HBO, AMC Premier, Lifetime Movie Pass, CBS All Access, Hallmark Movies Now, Starz
- ▶ **Free (usually ad based)** – Crackle, FreeDive, Hoopla, Internet Archive, Kanopy, Pluto TV, Roku Channel

## WITH WHEATLAND BROADBAND'S *NEWER, FASTER, CHEAPER!* RATE PLANS, WE HAVE OPTIONS TO FIT YOUR NEEDS.

Streaming services typically range from \$9.99 - \$40 a month. Many viewers use multiple streaming services for live and on-demand viewing.

Providers often offer free trials so you can find the right service for you.

No matter which service you choose, **WHEATLAND BROADBAND PROVIDES THE INTERNET TO STREAM YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS.**

Plan	Price	Download Speed	Best Use
Economy	\$44.95/month	3 Mbps	Stream one device Standard Definition
Basic	\$54.95/month	5 Mbps	Streaming High Definition or 2 devices in Standard Definition
Standard	\$64.95/month	10 Mbps	Streaming multiple devices in High Definition
Preferred	\$69.95/month	15 Mbps	3D or multiple devices in High Definition
Premium	\$74.95/month	20 Mbps	4K High Definition
Premium +	\$79.95/month	25 Mbps	Multiple devices streaming HD or 3D simultaneously

\*Not all plans may be available in all areas.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS AT [WWW.WBSNET.ORG](http://WWW.WBSNET.ORG) OR 877-684-1942

# PERRY SMITH

## Water Plant Operator of the Year

*I've spent my career in water treatment, and I am humbled that they thought of me for this award. It has always been our top priority to provide western Kansas residents with the highest quality water.*

**PERRY SMITH,  
MANAGER OF  
WATER WORKS**

This past March, the Kansas Rural Water Association hosted their 52nd Annual Conference and industry exhibitions at Century II Convention Center in Wichita where more than 80 expert presenters discussed topics concerning the water supply and wastewater industry.

During the conference, awards were presented to nominees in recognition of outstanding job performance or achievement in the water supply industry. **PERRY SMITH**, manager of water works for Wheatland Electric Water Treatment, was recognized as the Water Plant Operator of the Year.

Smith has been in the water treatment and supply industry for the past 30 years. Since 1995, he has been the superintendent of Finney County Rural Water District #1 and was hired by Wheatland Water as the manager of water works during the 2002 construction of the reverse osmosis plant located in Finney County.

As a Class IV certified operator, Smith oversees the treatment of approximately 6 million gallons of water per day. The purified water is used for several industrial applications and as a wholesale water supply for Garden City residents and Finney County Rural Water District #1.



**Perry Smith, manager of water works for Wheatland Electric Water Treatment, was recognized as the Water Plant Operator of the Year.**

Upon receiving his award, Smith said, "I've spent my career in water treatment, and I am humbled that they thought of me for this award. It has always been our top priority to provide western Kansas residents with the highest quality water and is something we take great pride in at Wheatland Water."

Providing clean water to Kansans is a cherished service and Wheatland Elec-



Francis Lobmeyer, Water Works Technician, and Perry Smith, Manager of Water Works, stand at the 20 inch incoming raw water pipeline that feeds the reverse osmosis skids. Air operated valves (red valves) are mounted on the piping and function when the plant is called to run.

tric has been supplying Kansans with purified water for nearly 20 years.

Wheatland Electric was formed in 1948 in response to the community need for safe reliable electricity. Providing “sustainable development in their communities” is at the heart of the seventh cooperative principal—Concern for Community—and is woven into our cooperative fabric. To that end, Wheatland leadership took action in 2000 after becoming aware of the poor water quality and supply issues area residents were facing. Two years later the construction of the reverse osmosis treatment plant was completed. Smith said, “When we built the water treatment plant, there was a real need in the area for clean water that was properly managed.”

The Wheatland Water reverse osmosis plant is a wholesale water provider that can produce 6.5 million gallons of purified water per day. The treated water is used for industrial applications and for residential water suppliers in Finney County.

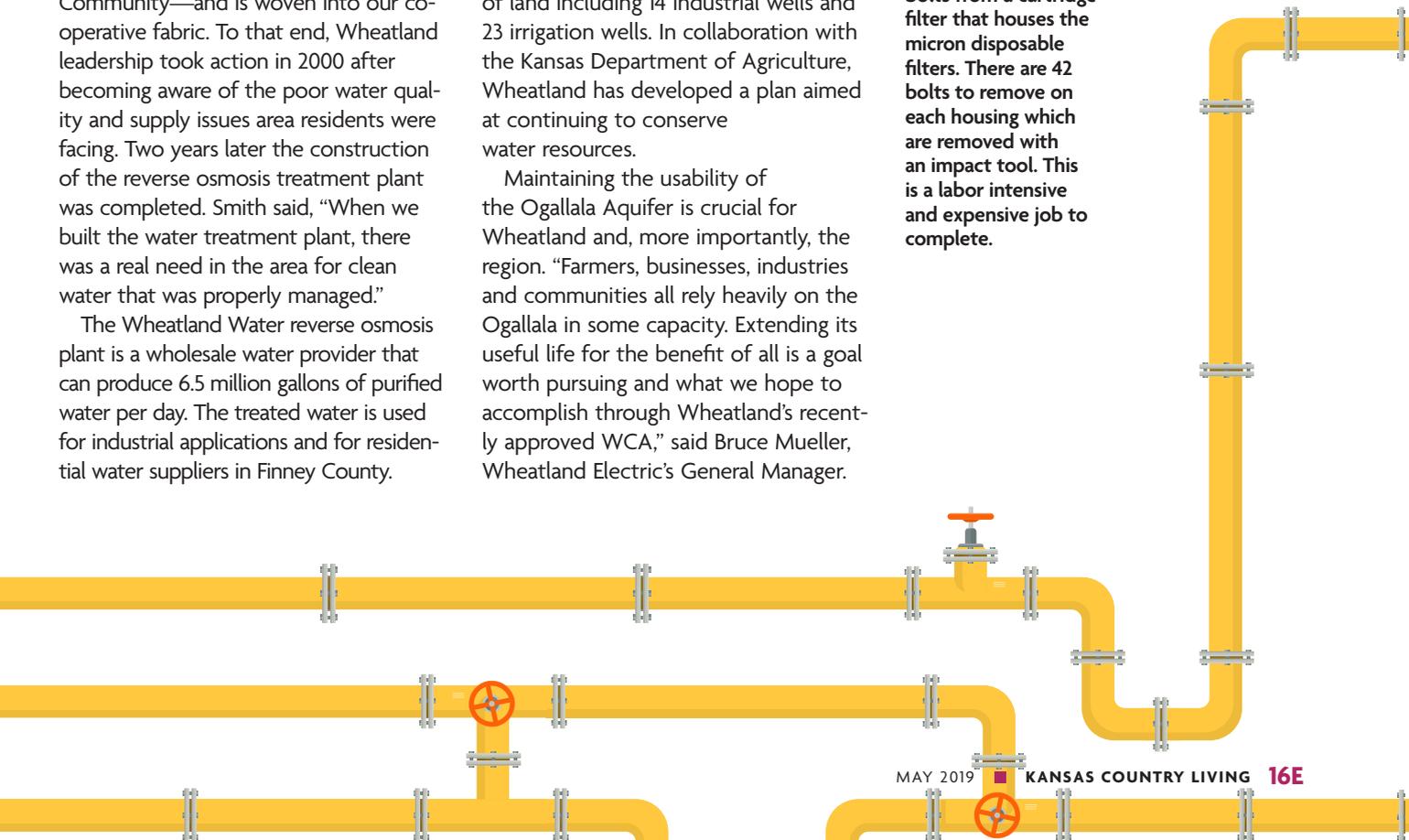
There has been plenty of dialogue in the past several years surrounding the declining water levels of the Ogallala aquifer and its effects on the quality of drinking water.

In September 2018, Wheatland approved the Water Conservation Area (WCA) that comprises over 8,000 acres of land including 14 industrial wells and 23 irrigation wells. In collaboration with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Wheatland has developed a plan aimed at continuing to conserve water resources.

Maintaining the usability of the Ogallala Aquifer is crucial for Wheatland and, more importantly, the region. “Farmers, businesses, industries and communities all rely heavily on the Ogallala in some capacity. Extending its useful life for the benefit of all is a goal worth pursuing and what we hope to accomplish through Wheatland’s recently approved WCA,” said Bruce Mueller, Wheatland Electric’s General Manager.



Francis Lobmeyer removes the retaining bolts from a cartridge filter that houses the micron disposable filters. There are 42 bolts to remove on each housing which are removed with an impact tool. This is a labor intensive and expensive job to complete.



# New & Improved!

Visit our website at [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net)

Check out Wheatland Electric's new website. The sleeker, more user-friendly website has several features making it easier for you to keep up-to-date with what is happening at your cooperative and pay your bill.

The homepage now features the SmartHub login, making it quick and easy to pay bills online. The homepage also has a news and events feed, a featured video and links to our social media.

Check out the new and improved Wheatland website at [www.weci.net](http://www.weci.net).



Wheatland's new homepage features easy access to SmartHub. Through detailed graphics, you'll be able to monitor your usage 24/7 and find ways to reduce and save.



On the site, you can stay up-to-date with Wheatland news, check out informational videos and connect with Wheatland Electric on Facebook!

## Safety Starts with You Continued from page 16A ►

designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

### Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an under-wired home. With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you get from Wheatland Electric, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or

loose, a grounded cord will not provide the protection designed into its performance. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and Wheatland Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable and competitively priced power to all of our members, while "Delivering Energy for Life." We urge you to keep these electrical safety tips in mind so you can note potential hazards before damage or injury occurs.

*Until next time, take care.*

# Pre-pay Power is Catching On



(From left) Garden City Consumer Service Representative Megan Sneath, our 100th prepay member Cassie Martinez, and Garden City Consumer Service Representative Rabecca Lopez.

Congratulations **CASSIE MARTINEZ!** She was our 100th member to sign up for Prepay Power.

No deposit. No late fees. No due date. No monthly statements!

To celebrate our 100th member signing up for our Prepay Power Program, we presented Martinez with a certificate, \$50 bill credit, balloon bouquet and a bag of goodies.

Our goal is to empower our members by allowing payment flexibility that best fits individual budgets and lifestyles. Since

Prepay Power is designed to pay as you go, the program makes you more aware of your personal energy consumption and how much money you are spending daily. With Prepay and SmartHub you will be able to see your usage by the day, week and month, know how much you spent in that time frame and more importantly where you can save!

To find out more about this program and how it could benefit you, check out our website at: <https://www.weci.net/convenience-prepay-power>.

## Thank You! National Lineworker Appreciation Day

Recently, Wheatland Electric celebrated National Lineworker Appreciation Day at our seven local offices. Gifts and mints were passed out to members, and linemen received special gifts as a token of gratitude for all they do throughout the year.

“I would like to personally thank each and every one of our linemen for their hard work and dedication,” said Wheatland’s General Manager Bruce Mueller. “Our linemen work in nearly every weather condition imaginable throughout the year to keep the power on for all of us. Regardless of the weather and the task at hand, they are always ready and willing to do the job. Wheatland has provided safe and reliable power to our members for 71 years, and we couldn’t have done it without our linemen.”

Thank you to those who showed their support and appreciation for our Wheatland linemen by using #ThankaLineman or #ThankaLineworker on their social media posts.

## SAFETY Tip of the Month

Lightning can strike 10 miles away from rainfall. Don’t be fooled just because it is not raining. Avoid open areas. Do not be the tallest object in the area as lightning tends to strike taller objects. And stay away from tall trees, towers and utility poles. When thunder roars, go indoors!

## Co-ops Vote: Harper Town Hall Meeting



State Senator Larry Alley (right standing) and State Representative Kyle Hoffman answered questions at the town hall meeting in Harper.

Let your voice be heard. On April 12, two state legislators held a town hall meeting at the Wheatland Electric office in Harper. **STATE SENATOR LARRY ALLEY** and **STATE REPRESENTATIVE KYLE HOFFMAN** took turns discussing a variety of issues including education, mental health\*, and taxes.

The meeting started with each delegate explaining his individual policy positions. After the opening remarks, constituents were treated to coffee and donuts, and had the opportunity to ask Sen. Alley and Rep. Hoffman questions. Town hall meetings like the one in Harper allow for your voice to be heard and keep an open dialogue between citizens and the politicians who represent them.

If you have an opportunity to attend a town hall meeting in your area here are some tips to help you prepare:

### Find Out Dates & Locations

Keep an eye on your legislator's official website to find out when town hall meetings will be held in your district. You can also stay up-to-date with events and hot button issues by following your representatives on social media, signing up for email alerts, or periodically calling for event updates. Typically, a delegate will hold several town hall meetings around their district, so if you miss one, be on the lookout for another meeting in a different part of your district. To find your state elected officials by address you can visit: <https://openstates.org>.

### Have Questions Prepared

Make sure you have your question(s) prepared in advance. Limit yourself to ONE question at a time. Do your homework! It doesn't hurt to do some

extra research before asking a question, especially on a complex issue.

### Be Polite

Your question will be best received if it is delivered respectfully and tactfully. It's a good idea to introduce yourself by name and city before proceeding to ask your question. As is always polite, it's important to incorporate a thank you at the end of your question as well.

### Don't Leave Early

Most representatives will stick around for a couple extra minutes to take additional questions. So, if you were not given the chance to ask your question during the meeting, or if you came up with another question during the meeting, you may still have a chance to get an answer afterwards. This time will also give you the opportunity to network with other attendees. If someone in the audience asked a question that is in line with your views, talk to them after the meeting is over.

